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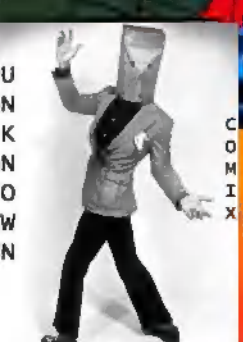
SPIDER-MAN 2099™



UNKNOWN COMIX

BEHIND the MASK

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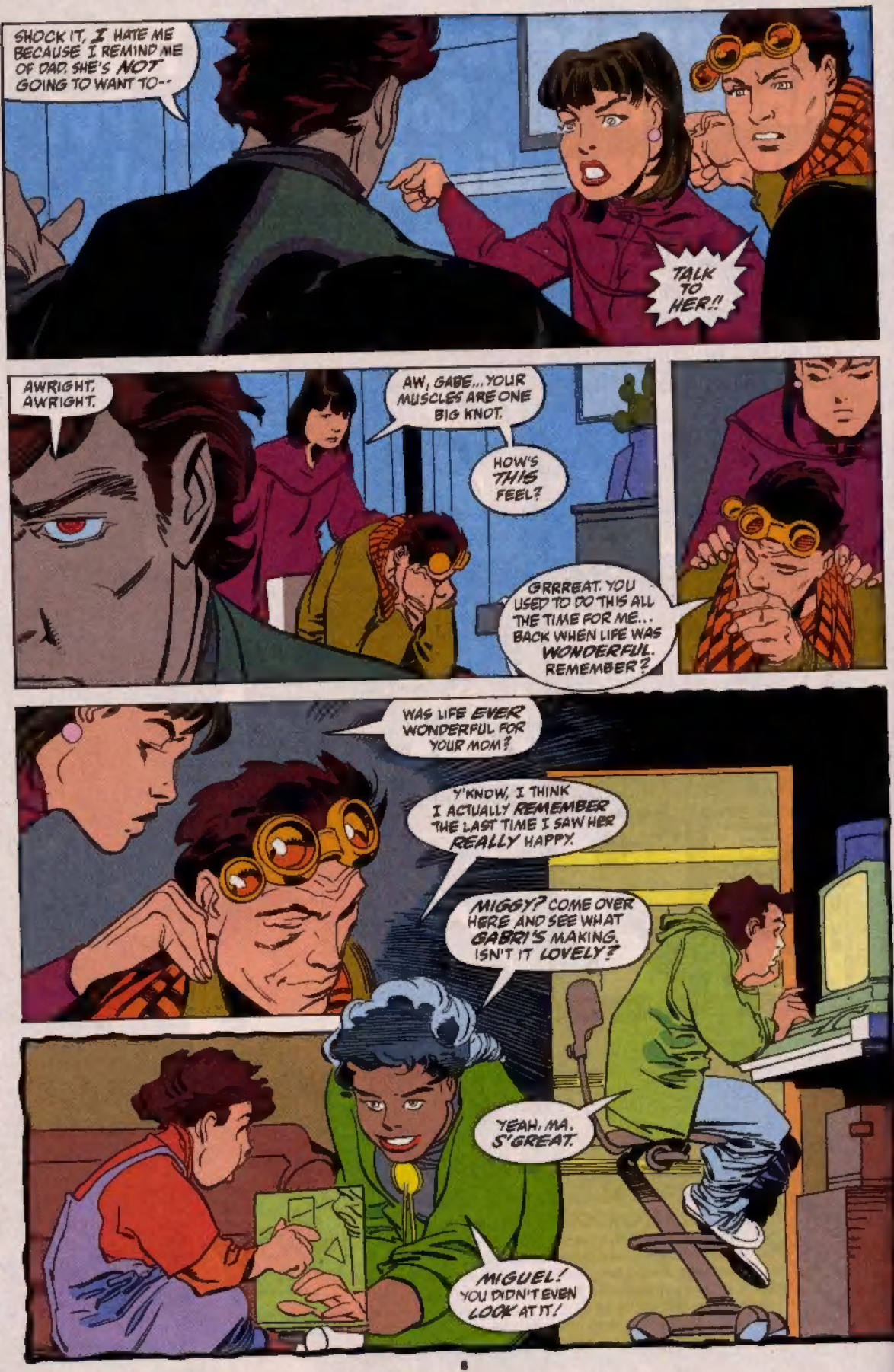
GOOD... THAT'S...
...THAT'S GOOD...
YOU'VE... BEEN A... GOOD SON, GABRI...
...AND THE WELLVALE HOME... THEY'VE ALL BEEN GOOD TO ME...
IT'S... IT'S A GOOD LIFE...
MIGGY... HE SAID YOU WERE HERE...
GABRI SAID...
WAS HE LYING TO MAKE...TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER...?
NO, MA, I WASN'T LYING. HE'S RIGHT HERE.
MIGGY, GET WHERE SHE CAN SEE YOU.

MA...
MA, KNOCK IT OFF. YOU'RE UPSETTING DANA.
MIGUEL...? MAYBE WE SHOULD... CALL SOME-ONE..?
HEY! CRAZY LADY! I'M NOT IMPRESSED, OKAY?
YOU'RE NOT DEAD! OKAY?
I could be.
THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
YES, IT IS.
NO! IT'S NOT!
OH, THIS IS MORONIC!
AW, GO EASY ON HER, MIGGY.
WELL, I'M TIRED OF THIS! EVERY COUPLE OF MONTHS WE GO THROUGH THIS NONSENSE!
THAT'S EXACTLY THE SORT OF ATTITUDE I'D'VE EXPECTED FROM YOU!
GO TALK TO HER.
ME?! WHY ME?! SHE HATES ME! SHE'S ALWAYS HATED ME BECAUSE I REMIND HER OF DAD!


SHOCK IT, I HATE ME BECAUSE I REMIND ME OF DAD. SHE'S NOT GOING TO WANT TO--
TALK TO HER!!
AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT.
AW, GABE... YOUR MUSCLES ARE ONE BIG KNOT.
HOW'S THIS FEEL?
GRRREAT. YOU USED TO DO THIS ALL THE TIME FOR ME... BACK WHEN LIFE WAS WONDERFUL. REMEMBER?
WAS LIFE EVER WONDERFUL FOR YOUR MOM?
Y'KNOW, I THINK I ACTUALLY REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I SAW HER REALLY HAPPY.
MIGGY? COME OVER HERE AND SEE WHAT GABRI'S MAKING. ISN'T IT LOVELY?
YEAH, MA. S'GREAT.
MIGUEL! YOU DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT!

YOUR BIG BROTHER'S FORGETTING HOW TO HAVE FUN, GABRI. HE'S ALL IN A RUSH TO GROW UP.
I'M SORRY, MA. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE TO LOOK. I SWEAR.
DON'T YOU BE HURRYING TO GROW UP, GABRI. YOU'LL GET ALL GRUMPY LIKE MIGUEL'S GETTING.
GOOD BOY. GABRI LOVES WHEN YOU SAY NICE THINGS ABOUT--
WHERE'S MY SON?!
YOU HAVE TWO SONS, GEORGE. HOW WAS YOUR DAY?
I MEAN MY BIG SON! AH! HERE WE GO!
MY DAY?! SUPERB! BECAUSE I'VE GOT SUPERB NEWS!
MIGUEL, YOUR APTITUDE TEST SCORES RANKED YOU IN THE TOP ONE PERCENTILE.
YOU'RE GOING INTO SPECIAL TRAINING, SON, AT ALCHEMAX'S TOP FACILITY!
GEORGE YOU CAN'T JUST... I MEAN, THEY TAKE HIM AWAY FOR THAT, DON'T THEY? AWAY FROM HOME?
THERE'LL BE VISITING TIME. WHAT, IS HE SUPPOSED TO ROOT AROUND HIS MOTHER'S SKIRTS ALL HIS LIFE?
YOU FUSS OVER HIM FAR TOO MUCH AS IT IS!
SMILE, BOY! THIS IS THE START OF GREAT THINGS FOR YOU!

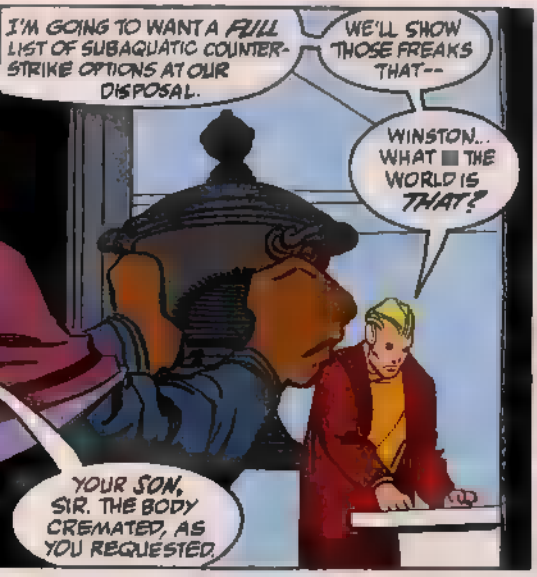
BUT SHOULDN'T WE DISCUSS THIS? MY OPINION HAS TO COUNT FOR SOMETHING!
I MEAN, I'M HIS MOTHER! I SHOULD HAVE SOME SAY... AND SO SHOULD HE!
MIGUEL, DO YOU WANT TO DO THIS THING?
OF COURSE HE DOES! DON'T YOU, BOY?
Uh... YESSIR.
NO, HE DOESN'T! HE'S JUST MORE AFRAID OF YOU THAN HE IS OF ME!
I WON'T SEE THEM YANK HIM OUT OF HIS HOME AND TURN HIM INTO SOME... SOME STOOGE! I WON'T ALLOW IT!
YOU WON'T ALLOW?!
I'LL SHOW YOU "WON'T ALLOW!"
" WE WERE USED TO THEIR FIGHTING ALL THE TIME... BUT HE'D NEVER... I MEAN, NOT LIKE THAT...
" MIGGY JUST HELD ME. DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING. THAT NIGHT I EVEN CLIMBED INTO BED WITH HIM, AND HE JUST KEPT HOLDING ME... "

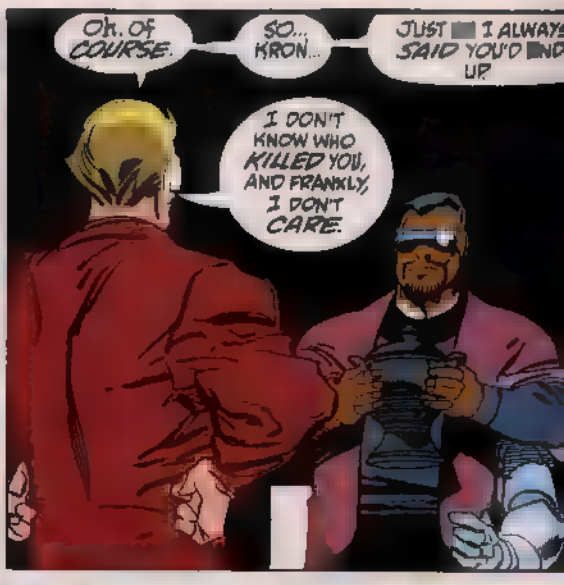
BACK THEN, MIGGY REALLY CARED ABOUT ME. ABOUT PEOPLE. HE WASN'T ALWAYS TRYING TO TEAR THEM DOWN WITH SMART REMARKS.
HE STILL CARES. I KNOW IT. BUT HE TRIES TO HIDE IT.
HE'S SO GOOD AT HIDING THINGS.
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
I REMEMBER ONCE, WE WERE OUT ON A DATE. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME I MET YOUR DAD. IT WAS AFTER YOUR FOLKS BROKE UP... AND ABOUT A YEAR OR SO BEFORE YOUR DAD DIED...
WELL, HELLO, STRANGER!
SOMEONE BROKE THIS ONE. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT?
WHEN I HELPED DESIGN THE PUBLIC EYE NET, IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME SOME INGRATES MIGHT RESENT OUR WATCHING OUT FOR THEIR SAFETY.
WHO'S YOUR FRIEND, MIGUEL?
WELL? ANSWER ME, BOY. I'M STILL YOUR FATHER.
SHE ONE OF YOUR TYPICAL AIR-HEADS? THE KIND YOU LIKE BECAUSE YOU CAN MAKE FUN OF 'EM AND THEY DON'T EVEN REALIZE IT?

THAT'S WHEN I WAS FIFTEEN, OLD MAN. I'VE GROWN UP A LITTLE SINCE THEN.
SO I HEAR YOU'RE GETTING REMARRIED, DAD. GOING TO MAKE SOME OTHER WOMAN SO CRAZY THAT SHE CHECKS OUT OF REALITY, YOU SICK--
DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF.
MIGUEL!
MR. O'HARA, MIGUEL'S SORRY. HE DIDN'T MEAN IT.
Hah! 'COURSE HE MEANT IT, COOKIE. HE'S MY SON, AND MEANS EVERY WORD.
C'MON, BOY. TAKE A SWING AT ME. YOU KNOW YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO.
THINK YOU CAN TAKE ME? Huh? I MEAN, I'M JUST AN OLD MAN.!
heh.
YOU MAKE A CUTE COUPLE! I'LL DANCE AT YOUR WEDDING!
I'LL DANCE AT YOUR FUNERAL.

HE DIDN'T.
DANCE, I MEAN.
I EVEN SAW HIM CRY, JUST A LITTLE... WHEN HE THOUGHT NO ONE WAS LOOKING.
SO DON'T TELL ME HE DOESN'T CARE...
...BECAUSE I WON'T BELIEVE IT.
...
I HATE WHEN IT'S THIS WET.
CAN YOU SEE THE VIEW OUR HOLOCAMERAS ARE PROVIDING, Mr. STONE?
YES, ROMAN; PERFECTLY... ALTHOUGH I WISH I COULDN'T.
HOW LONG WILL THIS DAMAGE SET BACK THE ATLANTIS RESTORATION?
HARD TO SAY, Sir.

AND THE PERPETRATORS?
NOW THAT'S NOT HARD TO SAY AT ALL, SIR. WE HAVE A FULL VISUAL LOG.
I'LL RUN IT BACK FOR YOU. BUT YOU'RE NOT GONNA LIKE IT.
BLAST! I KNEW IT!
THOSE MUTATE FREAKS! THEY THINK THEIR INFERNAL "NEW ATLANTIS" SHOULD BE THE SOLE UNDERWATER POWER!
WELL, THEY'VE SCREWED UP ROYALLY THIS TIME. ALCHEMAX WILL NOT BE TREATED IN THIS MANNER. IT IS UNACCEPTABLE.
I WANT FULL PROJECTIONS FOR RESTORATION ON MY DESK BY NOON TOMORROW.
UNDERSTOOD, ROMAN?
Yessir.
WINSTON./ END THIS TRANSMISSION AND GET IN HERE!


I'M GOING TO WANT A FULL LIST OF SUBAQUATIC COUNTER-STRIKE OPTIONS AT OUR DISPOSAL.
WE'LL SHOW THOSE FREAKS THAT--
WINSTON... WHAT THE WORLD IS THAT?
YOUR SON, SIR. THE BODY CREMATED, AS YOU REQUESTED.


OH. OF COURSE.
SO... KRON...
JUST I ALWAYS SAID YOU'D END UP
I DON'T KNOW WHO KILLED YOU, AND FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE.

STILL, YOU MY SON, I SHOULD SHOW FINAL GESTURE FOR YOUR PASSING.

FLUUUSH

HERE, WINSTON.
STICK SOME FLOWERS IN IT SOMETHING. NO IN THE GOING TO
YES, SIR.

MA! WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?!
YOU KNOW CIGARETTES ARE ILLEGAL!
SO?
SO THEY CAN KILL YOU.
SO CAN CHILDREN.
MA... I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN VISITING YOU MORE OFTEN!
SLAP
LIAR!
OOOKAY. I'M GLAD I HAVEN'T BEEN VISITING YOU [redacted] OFTEN!
SLAP
FRESH!

[redacted] BETTER, CRAZY LADY?
LOOK, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
NOTHING.
NO, MA! NOT AGAIN! [redacted] GO THROUGH THIS ALL THE TIME, AND YOU PLAY THESE GAMES [redacted] I'M TIRED OF IT! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT IT [redacted] TO GABRI? TO ME?
IT DOESN'T DO ANYTHING TO YOU. YOU'RE COMPLETELY SELF-CENTERED
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
OH, YES IT IS. I KEEP WAITING [redacted] YOU TO CHANGE, BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. WHY CAN'T YOU [redacted] A REAL CARING MAN, LIKE...
LIKE WHO, MA? LIKE GABRIEL? YOU GOING TO START TELLING ME AGAIN ABOUT HOW LOVING HE IS, AND...
NO, BECAUSE EVERY TIME I DO, YOU JUST MAKE FUN OF HIM, AND HE'S SUCH A GENTLE SOUL.
BUT HERE'S SOMEONE YOU WOULDN'T DARE MAKE FUN OF!
SPIDERMAN
A REAL MAN! SOMEONE WHO'S NOT AFRAID TO SPIT IN THE CORPORATE EYE!

SOMEONE WHO [redacted] THE [redacted] PICTURE, AND [redacted] TRYING TO REDRAW IT.
SOMEONE WHO CARES.
AND WHAT IF HE'S NOT LIKE THAT, Huh? EVER THINK OF THAT?
MAYBE HE'S JUST... JUST SOMEONE WHO GOT CAUGHT UP IN THINGS. SOMEONE WHO...
IF HE NEVER PUT THE COSTUME ON AGAIN, HE'D BE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO GO BACK TO HIS LIFE. WHAT IF...?
DON'T START!
DON'T START TRYING TO TEAR HIM DOWN, TOO! HE'S EVERYTHING YOU AREN'T!
OH, YEAH? OH, YEAH, CRAZY LADY?
YEAH!
WELL, TRY THIS ON, CRAZY LADY!
I'M SPIDER-MAN! ME! YOUR SON!

BWAA-HA-HAHAHA!
STOP THAT!
I AM SPIDER-MAN! LOOK!
I'VE GOT TALONS AND EVERYTHING!
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
SURE, HONEY. TUH... TALONS! Heeheeee
I'M NOT KIDDING! LOOK!
O'hhh God... MIGUEL...
I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED IT.
MA, WOULD YOU PLEASE LOOK AT--
YOU ACTUALLY GOT JEALOUS OF SPIDER-MAN AND TRIED TO CONVINCE ME YOU'RE HIM.
YOU'RE STILL A LOUSY SON, BUT YOU'RE TRYING HARDER.
THANK YOU FOR CARING WHAT I THINK, SWEETHEART.
Uh....
YOU'RE WELCOME.

ALL I EVER WANTED WAS TO BE IMPORTANT.
WORKING FOR ALCHEMAX WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING... I WAS IMPORTANT TO ALL THE WRONG PEOPLE.
BEING SPIDER-MAN IS THE WRONG THING... LAW-WISE, HEALTH-WISE... BUT HE'S IMPORTANT TO ALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE. THE PEOPLE I'VE [redacted] WORKING SO HARD AT IGNORING.
WHEN I PUT ON THAT COSTUME... I START THINKING AND ACTING DIFFERENTLY. FACE IT... "SPIDER-MAN" IS STARTING TO TAKE OVER WHEN THE MASK GOES ON.
IT WAS MIGUEL-IN-THE-COSTUME WHO SAVED THE SPECIALIST... AND ALMOST GOT KILLED IN REPAYMENT. AND WHEN THE VULTURE WAS FALLING... SPIDER-MAN, HAVING LEARNED THE LESSON, LET HIM.
MIGUEL WENT DOWNTOWN. BUT SPIDER-MAN CAME BACK UP. AND SINCE "MIGUEL" ISN'T THE LEAST BIT SORRY THE VULTURE FELL... IT'S LOOKING LIKE SPIDER-MAN DOESN'T NECESSARILY VANISH WHEN THE MASK COMES OFF.
THE WORLD WE'RE LIVING IN... GABRI SAW IT. KASEY SAW IT. EVEN THE CRAZY LADY SAW IT.
IF I'M SO BLASTED BRIGHT, WHY DIDN'T I SEE IT UNTIL I LOOKED THROUGH SPIDER-MAN'S EYES?
AND NOW THAT I HAVE... DO I FACE IT? OR TURN AWAY FROM IT?

THOR WILL BE COMING, MY FRIENDS! THE TIME HAS COME FOR YOU TO REPENT, FOR MOST ASSUREDLY...
... THE HAMMER WILL BE FALLING! AND IT WILL CRUSH THE UNWORTHY!
THOR
THOR
FOLLOW THE HAMMER!
CRUSH THEM!
CRUSH THEM INTO NOTHING!
OKAY! GEDDOWN FROM THERE! THIS IS UNAUTHORIZED!
THOR WILL COME, AND HE WILL PASS JUDGMENT!
DOWN WITH ALCHEMAX! ALCHEMAX MUST FALL!
AWRIGHT! THAT'S IT.
SHOW'S OVER!
YOUR SHOW WILL BE OVER! YOURS!
MOVE BEFORE I BREAK BOTH YOUR LEGS INSTEAD OF JUST THE ONE I'M GONNA BREAK!
UNLESS YOU'RE LOOKIN' TO BE BUSTED, TOO, I'D GET GOIN'.
TAP TAP

IT'S A SPIDER-ITE!
BRAK
THUK!
WHUMP
THE SHOCK IT IS! IT'S THE REAL THING!
CALL IT IN! CALL IT--

UNNHFFF!!
PUT THE GUNS DOWN OR I'LL HURT YOU BADLY.
EEYAAAA
WRONG, P.E.'S.
RUN HOME AND TELL YOUR MASTERS..
WHAT, DID YOU THINK I WAS KIDDING?

BETTER YET... I'LL TELL THEM MYSELF.
THIS PARTICULAR STREET CORNER HAS PERSONAL MEANING ANYWAY.
ON YOUR WAY, COPS! WE'RE NOT AFRAID OF YOU!
ALCHEMAX!
STARK!
AND WHOEVER ELSE MIGHT BE WATCHING.
ONE WARNING, AND ONLY ONE. I HOPE YOU'RE LISTENING BECAUSE HERE IT IS:
SPIDER-MAN ISN'T KIDDING AROUND ANYMORE.
KRAKK

SOME TIME LATER...
HELLO, DAD. IT'S BEEN A WHILE. NOT SINCE THE FUNERAL... AND BEFORE THAT, THE DAY I WAS WITH DANA.
YOU EVER WONDER WHY I DIDN'T HIT YOU THAT DAY? I'LL TELL YOU.
BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID I MIGHT GO NUTS AND KILL YOU... AND I WANTED YOU TO LIVE TO BE OLD. REEEEAAAL OLD.
OLD AND DECREPIT, WITH AN ARTIFICIAL HEART AND MECHANICAL KIDNEYS, AND EVERYTHING ALWAYS BREAKING DOWN.
I WANTED YOU TO SUFFER EVERY POSSIBLE WEAKNESS OLD AGE COULD INFLICT.
AND INSTEAD YOU UPPED AND DIED AND WRECKED THE PLAN.
DANA SPOTTED ME CRYING, I THINK, AT THE FUNERAL. I CAN GUESS WHAT SHE MADE OF IT.
THEN AGAIN... THE WORLD IS WHAT WE MAKE OF IT.
AND.. AT LEAST UNTIL I'VE MANAGED TO FIND A CURE FOR MY.. CONDITION...
...I'M GOING TO START MAKING IT INTO A VISION THAT I CAN STAND TO LOOK AT.
NEXT STATE of SIEGE